

# Helping Homeless Students Persist to Graduation

Homeless Liaisons Summer Professional Learning Summit

KHSSA

Lexington, KY

August 25, 2016



# Recent McKinney-Vento Changes

- ▶ Only five states – Colorado, Kansas, Virginia, Washington and Wyoming – currently report high school graduation rates for homeless students.
- ▶ Beginning in the 2016-2017 school year (effective 10/1/16), ALL states will be required to report graduation rates for homeless youth due to new ESSA amendments.



# Homeless Students in Kentucky

- ▶ According to 2013-14 data from the U.S. Dept of Education, Kentucky leads the country in the rate of child homelessness.
- ▶ Over 31,000 children (nearly 5 % of the state's public school students) are considered homeless.
- ▶ The number of homeless kids in KY schools has nearly doubled in less than six years.
  - **17,716** (2006-07)
  - **35,000** (2011-12)
  - Slightly more than **31,000** (2013-14)
- ▶ Map of KY homeless students by county:  
<http://tabsoft.co/2b08ztv>



# Unique Kentucky Issues

- ▶ In five Eastern Kentucky counties, more than 1 in 5 students are considered homeless by school districts.
- ▶ The rapidly declining coal industry and drug addiction have exacerbated the problem.
- ▶ Many children have suffered the loss of one or both parents and are raised by grandparents or other relatives in “kinship care.”



# Unique Kentucky Issues cont.



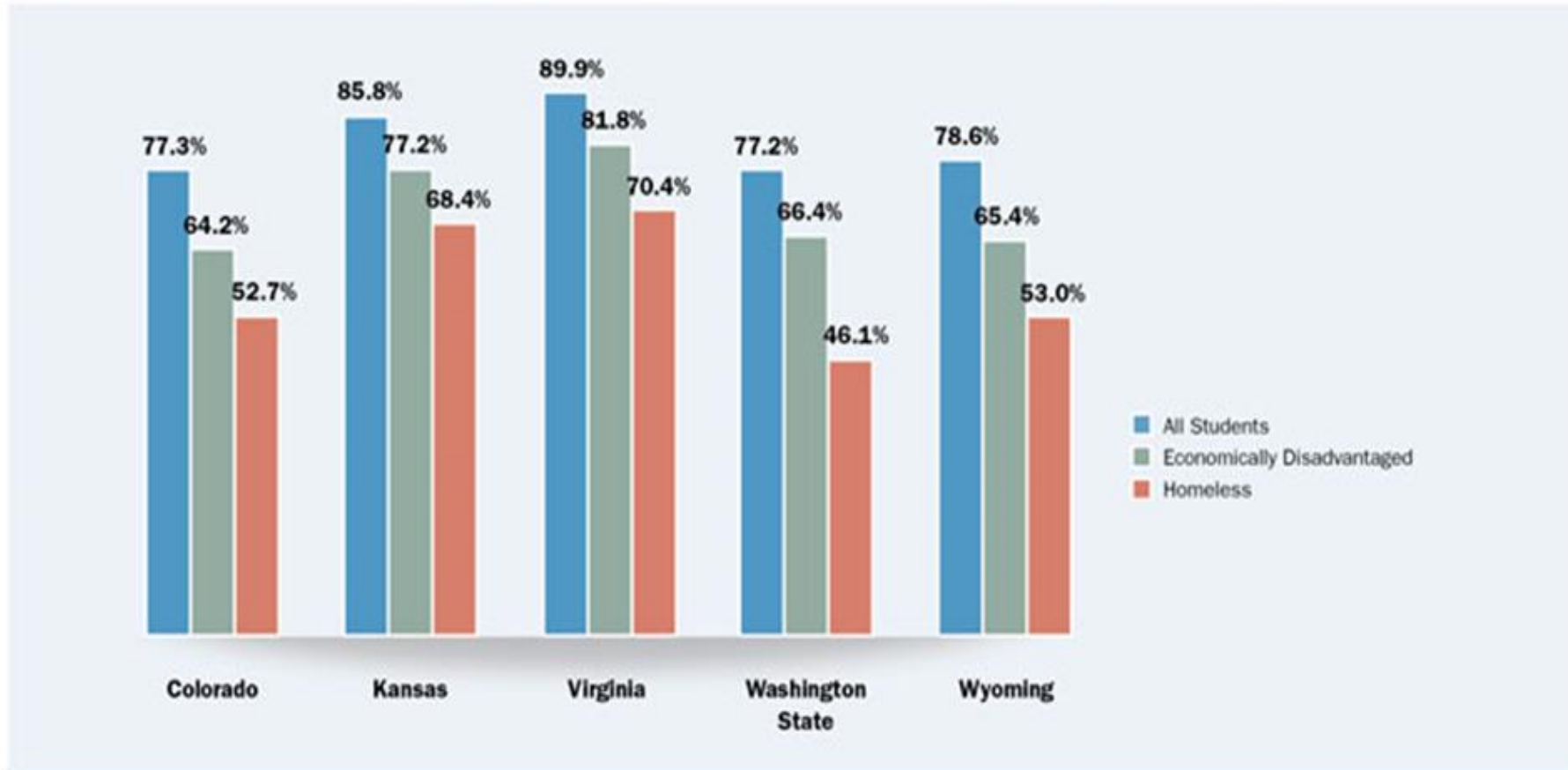
- ▶ According to Kids Count data, 7% of children in KY (70,000 kids) are living with neither parent – the highest rate in the country.
- ▶ Nearly one in three (32%) of Kentucky children lived in poverty last year - the worst rate in the country.
- ▶ There are pockets of poverty exceeding a rate of 50% in Kentucky's eastern counties.

# Impacts of Homelessness on Children and Youth

- ▶ Higher incidences of acute and chronic illnesses, depression, and anxiety
- ▶ Higher rate of substance abuse
- ▶ Poor scores on standardized reading and math tests; often required to repeat a grade
- ▶ A youth who experiences homelessness is 87% more likely to drop out of school



**Graph 2: Class of 2014 On-time (Four-year) State High School Graduation Rate by Poverty and Housing Status**



**Source:** Colorado Department of Education, 2013–14 State Policy Report: Dropout Prevention and Student Engagement; Kansas State Department of Education, State Level 2013–14 Graduation and Dropout Data—State-level Four- and Five-year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates by Subgroup (Public Schools Only); Kansas State Department of Education, Four-year and Five-year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates 2014–15 Fact Sheet; Virginia Department of Education, State-level Cohort Report, Four Year Rate—Class of 2014; Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Graduation and Dropout Statistics Annual Report, April 2015; Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Bulletin No. 072–11 Assessment and Student Information—Attachment 2 Class of 2011 Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate Calculations; Wyoming Department of Education, “Wyoming State Graduation Rates: Federally Adjusted Graduation Rates for the 2013-14 Cohort,” <http://edu.wyoming.gov/data/graduation-rates>.





- ▶ Homeless students are one of the fastest-growing subgroups of students in the U.S.
- ▶ More than 1.3 million students were homeless during the 2013-14 school year, according to a new report released by America's Promise Alliance.
- ▶ 7% increase from the previous year and more than double the number of homeless students estimated in 2006-2007







- ▶ Two thirds of the youth participating in this study (67%) said they were uncomfortable talking with people at their school about their housing situation and related challenges (Hidden in Plain Sight: Homeless Students in America's Public Schools, 2016)
- ▶ Parents may not want to report their living situation for fear of losing custody of their children.
- ▶ Unaccompanied youth may fear being placed into the foster care system.

# Who Should Be Trained to Recognized Homelessness Warning Signs? Not Just Teachers!

- ▶ School nurses
- ▶ Front office staff
- ▶ Cafeteria staff
- ▶ Bus drivers
- ▶ School counselors and social workers
- ▶ Truancy/attendance officers
- ▶ Teachers
- ▶ Administrators



# What Are Some of The Warning Signs?

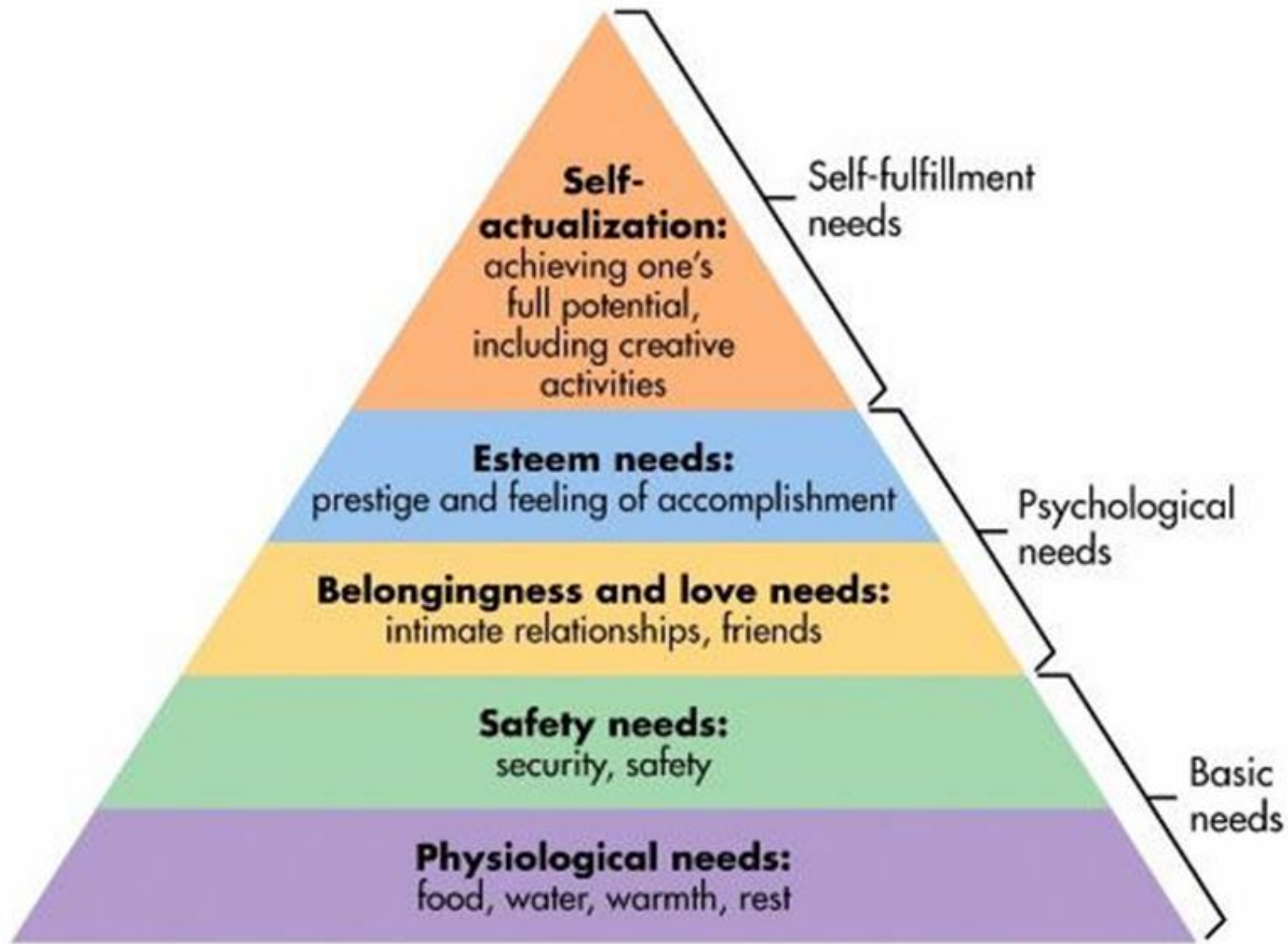
- ▶ Fatigue (falling asleep in class)
- ▶ Complaints of hunger; may hoard food
- ▶ Frequent tardiness or absenteeism
- ▶ Wearing the same clothes for several days, clothes that don't fit, or inappropriate seasonal clothing
- ▶ Poor hygiene
- ▶ Few, if any, school supplies



# What Are Some of The Warning Signs cont.

- ▶ **Consistently poor preparation for school, such as missing/incomplete homework or inability to complete special projects**
- ▶ **Anxiety late in the day or hesitation to leave school**
- ▶ **Strong reluctance to part with personal possessions, such as placing them in a cubby or locker**





# Meet Basic Needs First

- ▶ Food – breakfast and lunch provided at school, snacks in classrooms, food pantries, community donations, backpack programs
- ▶ Clothes – provide a clothes exchange where families/students can donate and take free clothing - no questions asked; consider providing laundry facilities for students at school (Whirlpool Care Counts Program)
- ▶ Housing – find community resources to help such as local shelters
- ▶ Don't forget that your FRYSC can help!



# Meet Basic Needs First

- ▶ Post a list of community agencies that can assist with food, clothing, energy assistance, employment, medical help, and shelter needs in your school office and other places parents/family members are likely to go.
- ▶ Create mouse pads and refrigerator magnets with this community information on them.





# Psychological Needs

- ▶ School provides stability for homeless students and gives them a sense of self-worth. They need at least one caring adult to talk to or check in with for emotional support.
- ▶ Students may need quiet, supportive places to study such as before/after school programs or alternate school hours (evenings, Saturdays). This can also give them opportunities to connect with other students and maintain friendships.



# What Schools Can Do

- ▶ Be aware of free help available: fee waivers for college entrance exams, Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate tests, and college applications
- ▶ Unaccompanied homeless youth can apply for federal financial aid for college as an independent student, which means they don't need to provide their parents' financial information on the FAFSA or have parents sign.



# What Schools Can Do cont.

- ▶ Become familiar with available community resources to help meet students' needs.
- ▶ Be flexible with assignments. Offer several alternatives from which all students can choose.
- ▶ Establish a clear attendance policy. Keep close track of student attendance and follow up immediately when students are absent.
- ▶ Provide workshops for teachers and staff members that address the unique needs of homeless students.
- ▶ Consider using staff work days to go into neighborhoods and homeless shelters to meet with parents.



# Help Bridge the Gap – Moving

- ▶ Learn which school a homeless student is moving to and contact appropriate staff members to facilitate the transfer of records and background information.
- ▶ Maintain contact with the transferring homeless student if possible.
- ▶ Create a portfolio to document the student's work, personal characteristics, and preferred learning style. If the student must transfer, the portfolio offers the next teacher a quick, easy way to pick up where the former teacher left off (Berliner, 2002).



# Credit Recovery

- ▶ Students who change schools late in high school can find themselves suddenly in danger of not graduating due to differing class and credit requirements.
- ▶ High schools often have “seat time” rules that prevent youth from earning credits if they enter the district late in the semester or leave early.
- ▶ The physical and mental stress caused by homelessness also affects students’ ability to earn credits. Many students experiencing homelessness, particularly unaccompanied homeless youth, must balance school with other pressing responsibilities such as working.



# Credit Recovery cont.

- ▶ Help youth remain in one school if possible.
- ▶ Use independent study programs, including learning labs, online learning, and computerized modules.
- ▶ Many programs and school districts waive online learning fees for students experiencing homelessness. McKinney-Vento subgrants and Title I, Part A funds also can help defray the costs of online learning and related transportation costs.
- ▶ Ensure that students experiencing homelessness can enroll in appropriate innovative and/or alternative programs.



# Resources

Hidden in Plain Sight report:

<http://www.gradnation.org/report/hidden-plain-sight>

Whirlpool Care Counts Program:

<http://www.whirlpool.com/everydaycare/>

AmeriCorps program through Partners for Education at Berea College (Knox Central, Leslie County, and Perry Central High Schools): [jenny\\_ceesay@berea.edu](mailto:jenny_ceesay@berea.edu);

[robert.bowers@leslie.kyschools.us](mailto:robert.bowers@leslie.kyschools.us); [tim.melton@knox.kyschools.us](mailto:tim.melton@knox.kyschools.us);  
[robert.roark@leslie.kyschools.us](mailto:robert.roark@leslie.kyschools.us)

Middle College High Schools: <http://mcnc.us/>

Opportunity Middle College - dual credit partnership between Fayette County Schools and Bluegrass Community and Technical College: [frank.laboone@fayette.kyschools.us](mailto:frank.laboone@fayette.kyschools.us)





**GEAR UP:**

<http://gearupky.org/>

**GEAR UP in Clinton County:**

[josh.moons@clinton.kyschools.us](mailto:josh.moons@clinton.kyschools.us);

[jake.asberry@clinton.kyschools.us](mailto:jake.asberry@clinton.kyschools.us)

**Gateway to College:**

<http://bit.ly/2bBnsA9>

**Getting Students to Graduation: A Multi-Layer Approach  
in Harrison County Schools:**

[jennylynn.hatter@harrison.kyschools.us](mailto:jennylynn.hatter@harrison.kyschools.us)

**Ensuring credit accrual and recovery:**

<http://bit.ly/2bxSBSY>

**Work-based learning:** <http://bit.ly/2bfWznt>





# Chronic Absenteeism Interagency Workgroup at KDE

This team is working on creating a profile of chronically absent students, proposing a state definition of 'chronically absent' to be used by districts, and finding a way to track transiency to help identify homeless students. They are using <90% FTE (full time equivalency) to measure chronically absent.

Contact:

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# Chronic Absenteeism by Grade

Grade	14-15	15-16
0	9048	8265
1	7476	7271
2	6434	6344
3	5840	5950
4	5597	5841
5	6123	5903
6	7329	7318
7	8268	8103
8	9269	9058
9	10854	11736
10	11179	11883
11	11815	12293
12	14623	15075
14	97	92



# Persistence to Graduation/Early Warning System



- ▶ KDE has recently updated its Persistence to Graduation webpage to include information about the new Early Warning System, which is a data mining tool built within Infinite Campus. The page also contains:
- ▶ A link to the Infinite Campus Beginning of Year Training PowerPoint, which explains both the Early Warning System and the Persistence to Graduation Report
- ▶ A link to a document exploring the similarities and differences between the Early Warning System and the Persistence to Graduation Report
- ▶ Information about each of these tools and how they can be used

Check out the updates at: <http://bit.ly/1yFytrd>

# Contact Information

**Donna Deal**

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**[donna.deal@education.ky.gov](mailto:donna.deal@education.ky.gov)**

**Note – My office is moving to a new building Sept 22-23 so there may be a slight delay in response during that time.**

